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"God Gave Us Two Arms — One for the Flu Shot, One for the COVID Shot," White House COVID Response Coordinator Says
Starting in March Ending on the 30th of the month
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March COVID-19 response coordinator, posted on X, "God gave us two arms — one for the flu shot and one for the COVID shot."
And at the same time, claiming that's why "we have to get it."

By Suzanne Burdick, Ph.D.

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The White House COVID-19 Response Team on Tuesday held a briefing to mark what health officials called a "major milestone" in the fight against COVID-19 — the [rapid authorization](#) of new COVID-19 booster shots for Americans ages 12 and older.

Commenting on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) May 20 [amended Emergency Use Authorization](#) for new the Pfizer and Moderna's mRNA vaccines, Dr. Ashish Jha, Biden's COVID-19 response coordinator, said:

"We expect millions will receive this shot in the coming weeks. And COVID-19 is shot at the same time or over the course of the fall when people go in for their flu vaccinations.

"The good news is you can get both your flu shot and COVID shot at the same time. It's actually great.

"I really believe this is why God gave us two arms. One for the flu shot and the other one for the COVID shot."

Jha's comments trended on Twitter.

Watch full video

The new vaccines, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommended](#) on Sept. 1, contain sequences from both the original SARS-CoV-2 virus and the most recently circulating [Omicron variant](#).

Dr. Anthony Fauci, who appeared with Jha during the briefing, said, "My message to you is simple. Get your updated COVID-19 shot. As soon as you are eligible to do it, make it a point yourself, your family and your community against COVID-19 disease."

Fauci said the new boosters will save lives and reduce hospitalizations.

"Although robust safety monitoring systems, we now have an extensive body of safety data as good or better than what we have for any prior vaccine," Fauci said.

Dr. Peter Marks, director of biologics evaluation and research, said:

"Our vaccine manufacturers did not have to go through months-long trials, and they did not have to pare over any human trial data, because they weren't necessary."

The continued:

"Let that sink in. The new BA.4/5 bivalent vaccines were tested only in mice, not humans.

"So there is no reason to think the boosters will be any safer than the ones we've been giving since last fall. Over 600 million shots — 600,000 people had aged 18-24 after their second dose in the [Kaiser study](#).

"Getting vaccinated soon after recovering from COVID-19 is foolhardy, and any officials mandating this soon after infection should be ashamed of their grossest risk of adverse reactions, including myocarditis."

Fauci pointed to data from mRNA vaccine efficacy trials in 2020, claiming they showed a "remarkable [90-95% efficacy](#) against symptomatic disease" — claims that have since been challenged.

Data from Moderna and Pfizer, Fauci said, indicated the updated bivalent boosters would provide "a substantial increase in the level of protection" against the original Wuhan strain of COVID-19 compared to:

Although Fauci cited no provider-specific figures, he also said Pfizer and Moderna data showed the bivalent vaccines induced "even higher levels of neutralizing antibodies in individuals who had recovered from COVID-19."

Based on these data, Fauci said, "We fully expect that the bivalent COVID-19 vaccines containing BA.4 and BA.5 sequences will offer better protection against currently circulating strains than the original vaccine."

Fauci admitted, however, that "it is difficult to predict how much better that protection will be."

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Biden, pediatricians push flu vaccines for kids and adults

On the same day as the briefing on the new boosters, Biden issued a press statement urging Americans to get vaccinated against both the COVID-19 virus and the flu.

"Just like your annual flu shot, you should get it [the new bivalent vaccine] sometime between Labor Day and Halloween. It's safe, it's easy to get, and it's free," he said.

Biden added:

"It's simple, and it's easy to understand. If you are vaccinated and 12 and older, get the new COVID-19 shot this fall. This vaccine can also cut your risk of getting COVID-19 nearly in half and reduce your chance of spreading it to others, and dramatically reduce your risk of severe COVID-19."

The statement did not cite evidence supporting Biden's claims.

Also on Tuesday, the American Academy of Pediatrics urged parents to get flu vaccines for their children as soon as possible.

The CDC [recommends the flu vaccine](#) for children 6 months and older "with rare exceptions."

But Dr. Michelle Fiori, a pediatrician with four decades of experience, questioned the CDC's recommendation.

While the flu can be a more serious illness than COVID-19 for children, the CDC's own [website](#) shows that, from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022, the number of flu deaths for children dropped from 2,000-20,000 to 199 during the 2019-2020 season.

Perrin added:

"Given how little we know about the flu, however, this is extremely rare. Vaccine efficacy in one report was [42.5% for flu vaccines](#), which does not exceed the desired vaccine efficacy threshold of 50%.

"What is often lacking in the conversation is how flu vaccines optimize the [immune system's overall health/immune function](#) via nutrition, targeted supplements during flu season, such as vitamins C and D, as well as the use of [natural antivirals](#) such as elderberry, quercetin and zinc, among others.

The major consideration when it comes to requiring vaccines for children is the risk vs. benefit ratio — whether it's the flu vaccine or the COVID-19 vaccine, he said.

"Since the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in children," Perrin said, "the risk from harm from the vaccine has been shown to be profoundly greater than the risk of illness from the virus."

Perrin cited reports of serious side effects in children, including heart issues and [myocarditis](#), changes in autonomous nervous system function (postural orthostatic tachycardia, or POTS), autoimmunity and [autoantibody issues](#), such as [Guillain-Barré syndrome](#).

"It is important to note that historically, with the introduction of previous novel vaccines such as the rotavirus vaccine, they were recalled after only eight incidents of harm," Perrin said.

"Children should not receive this experimental genetic immunomodulatory COVID-19 vaccine when the risk is that their risk of serious illness from COVID-19 is less than 1%," she said.

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Suzanne Burdick, Ph.D. is a reporter and researcher for The Defender based in Fairfield, Iowa. She holds a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Iowa, where she studied the role of mass media in the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), the ultimate goal of which was to create a missile defense shield. Communication. She has taught at various academic institutions in the United States and in Nairobi, Kenya.

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